



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, December 20, 2010
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ARMED BANK ROBBER SENTENCED

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS - Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, announced today that Brook Abebe, 44, an Ethiopian citizen legally in the United States and living in Indianapolis, was sentenced to 25 years in prison by United States District Judge Sarah Evans Barker following Abebe's guilty plea to armed bank robbery, brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence, and felon in possession of a firearm. This case was the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department.

On the afternoon of July 2, 2009, Brook Abebe robbed the Chase Bank branch located at 8858 Southeastern Avenue, Indianapolis. Brandishing both a Taurus .38 caliber revolver and a pellet rifle, Abebe approached the teller counter and demanded money. He pointed the firearm at bank employees and customers, and ordered them to the floor. When a customer exited the back doors of the bank, Abebe discharged one round from the firearm in the direction of the customer. The teller then handed the money to Abebe. Coincidentally, at this time, a United States postal carrier entered the bank to conduct a personal transaction. Abebe ordered the postal carrier to the floor. As soon as Abebe left the bank through the back doors, the postal carrier called 911 on his cellular phone and then exited the bank through the front door. Based on their crossing directions of travel, they met face-to-face outside the bank and collided. As Abebe raised the hand in which he held the firearm, the postal carrier grabbed that hand and Abebe fired into his face causing life-threatening and permanent injuries to the postal carrier.

Abebe fled by car, but was observed by a responding police officer who pursued him. During the pursuit, Abebe lost control of his car, crashed, and was arrested. The firearm and stolen currency were recovered from within the car. An audit indicated that Mr. Abebe had stolen approximately \$9,138.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney James M. Warden, who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Barker also imposed five years supervised release following Abebe's release from prison and order Abebe to pay restitution of \$3,300.70.

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